



Public Health  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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Date: March 23, 2016

To: Live Poultry Dealers in NC

The N.C. Division of Public Health and the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services are asking stores that sell or display chicks, ducklings and other live poultry to help educate their employees and the public about certain health risks associated with handling these birds. Additionally, we request you provide point of sale education regarding the baby chicks and salmonella infection by:

- Directing customers to your corporate website OR
- Directing customers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/SalmonellaBabyBirds/> OR
- If possible, distribute copies of the enclosed educational posters to all persons who purchase baby poultry

Contact with poultry can cause illness in people with a germ called *Salmonella*. These illnesses linked to contact with live poultry have been well documented. Poultry can carry *Salmonella* germs and still appear healthy and clean. These germs can contaminate a bird's body and anything in the area where they are displayed or housed. During 2013-2015, there were 1129 reported human cases of *Salmonella* illness and 274 hospitalizations associated with baby and backyard poultry nationwide. Fifty-three of those cases were in North Carolina.

While raising backyard poultry can be a great experience, it is important that feed store employees do some simple things to help protect themselves and their customers:

- **Provide point of sale education regarding baby chicks and salmonella infection.**
- Place the included color educational posters near areas where birds are displayed in clear view.
- Display birds out of reach of customers, especially children, so customers cannot easily touch birds.
- Offer hand-washing stations or hand sanitizer next to poultry display areas and tell customers to wash hands right after leaving the poultry display area.
- Clean and disinfect bird display enclosures between shipments of birds to prevent the spread of disease.

Feed stores can play an important role in educating the public on how to safely enjoy their backyard poultry. Thank you for your help in sharing these messages with your customers, employees and your community. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please call Nicole Lee at 919-733-3419.

Sincerely,

Nicole Lee, MPH  
Foodborne Disease Epidemiologist  
NC Division of Public Health

R. Douglas Meckes, DVM  
State Veterinarian  
NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Nothing Compares<sup>SM</sup>